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EXAMINER

BHAT, ADITYA S

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2863

DATE MAILED: 10/20/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

DETAILED ACTION

Information Disclosure Statement

The IDS filed on November 16, 2005 is not scanned into the file. Although there is an electronic file that corresponds to that date no legible copies of a 1449 are accessible in that file. With regards to the IDS form filed on July 19, 2004 a signed copy will be mailed with this office action.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

With regards to claims 1-34 the methods recited in the claimed invention do not produce a real life, real world, useful, concrete, and tangible **result**.

The claimed invention as a whole must accomplish a practical application. That is, it must produce a "useful, concrete and tangible **result**." State Street, 149 F.3d at 1373, 47 USPQ2d at 1601-02. The purpose of this requirement is to limit patent protection to inventions that possess a certain level of "real world" value, as opposed to subject matter that represents nothing more than an idea or concept, or is simply a starting point for future investigation or research (Brenner v. Manson, 383 U.S. 519, 528-36, 148 USPQ 689, 693-96); In re Ziegler, 992, F.2d 1197, 1200-03, 26 USPQ2d 1600, 1603-06 (Fed. Cir. 1993)).

A process that consists solely of the manipulation of an abstract idea is not concrete or tangible. See In re Warmerdam, 33 F.3d 1354, 1360, 31 USPQ2d 1754, 1759 (Fed. Cir. 1994). See also Schrader, 22 F.3d at 295, 30 USPQ2d at 1459. Nor can

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one patent "a novel and useful mathematical formula," Flook, 437 U.S. at 585, 198 USPQ at 195; electromagnetism or steam power, O'Reilly v. Morse, 56 U.S. (15 How.) 62, 113-114 (1853);

Please view the following guidelines to overcome 35 U.S.C. 101 rejection made in this office action in MPEP 2106 and/or

<http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/com/sol/og/2005/week47/patgupa.htm>

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hill et al. (EP 1 196 003 A2).

With regards to claim 1, Hill et al. (EP 1 196 003 A2). teaches a method for testing an HVAC system for a building structure from a remote location outside of the building structure,(12;figure 1) the HVAC system having a primarily active component and a primarily dormant component, the method comprising the steps of:

transmitting a test request to the HVAC system from the remote location; (Col. 3-4, Paragraph 0021, lines 58 &1-3)

performing a test on the primarily dormant component of the HVAC system in response to the test request (col. 3, Paragraph 0016, lines 6-7), and producing a test result; (Col. 4,Paragraph 0021, lines 1-2) and

transmitting the test result to a location outside of the building structure. (Col. 4, Paragraph 0021, line 2)

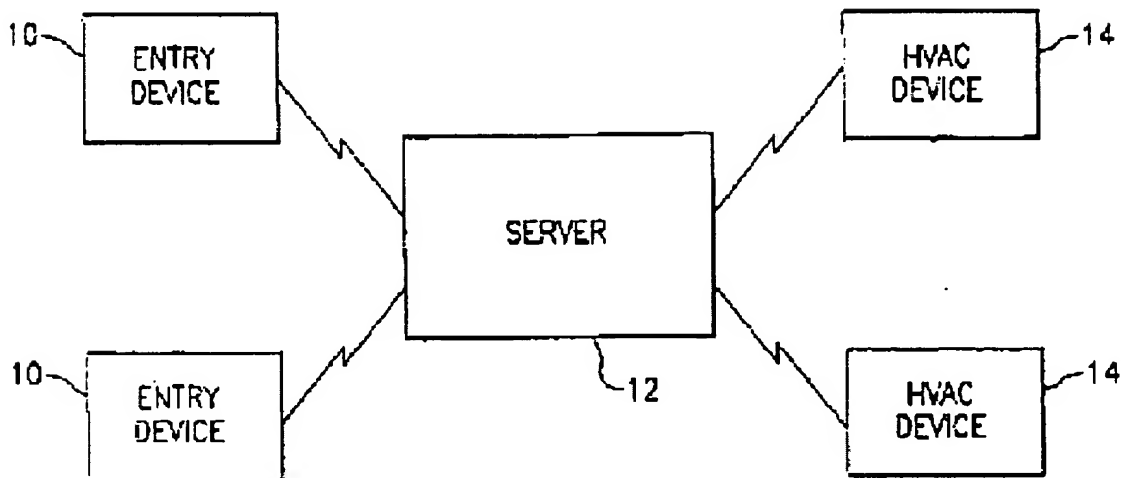


FIG.1

With regards to claims 2 and 4, Hill et al. (EP 1 196 003 A2) teaches that the primarily active component is a heating component or a cooling component. (14;figure 1)

With regards to claim 3 and 5, Hill et al. (EP 1 196 003 A2) teaches that the primarily dormant component is a cooling component or a heating component. (14; figure 1)

With regards to claims 2-5, the monitoring system is continuously monitoring/testing the system it would be with reasonable interpretation to assume that the heating/cooling components are being monitored in both active and dormant states.

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With regards to claim 6, Hill et al. (EP 1 196 003 A2) teaches the test request is transmitted to the HVAC system from a remote computer.

With regards to claims 7-10, Hill et al. (EP 1 196 003 A2) the test request is transmitted to the HVAC system from the remote computer via a telephone line connection, from the remote computer via a wireless connection, from the remote computer via a computer network, from the remote computer via the internet. (Col. 3, Paragraph 0016, line 1-5)

With regards to claims 11-12, Hill et al. (EP 1 196 003 A2) teaches a gateway (figure 1) for receiving the test request from the remote computer, and for communicating with the HVAC system wherein the gateway stores one or more tests. (Col. 5, Paragraph 0028, line 20-25) (figure 7)

UNIT DATABASE

UNIT NAME	UNIT PHONE #	POWER	MODE	ROOM TEMP	SETPOINT	FAN SPEED	LOUVER	TIMER	DIAGNOSTIC	ALARM METHOD 1	ALARM DATA 1
OFFICE	(315)555-3456	ON	HEAT	22	22	LOW	1	OFF	NONE	E-MAIL	XYZ@CARRIER.UTC.COM
MILAN	0131234123412	OFF	OFF	23	22	OFF	HOME	OFF	NONE	PHONE	(315)555-1234
FRANCE	3371234512345	ON	COOL	24	22	MEDIUM	6	OFF	NONE	E-MAIL	XYZ@CARRIER.UTC.COM
LOBBY	(315)555-4567	ON	FAIL	25	22	OFF	HOME	OFF	ROOM AIR	SMS	(315)555-2345

FIG.7

With regards to claim 13, Hill et al. (EP 1 196 003 A2) teaches the gateway submits at least one of the one or more tests to the HVAC system in response to the test request. (Col. 1, Paragraph 0003, line 23-25) (see figure 1)

With regards to claim 14, Hill et al. (EP 1 196 003 A2) teaches a subset of the one or more tests and submits the subset of the one or more tests to the HVAC system

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in response to the test request. (See figure 6) (unit1,2....N)

USER DATABASE

USER NAME	PASSWORD	UNIT 1	UNIT 2	...	UNIT N
CARRIER 1	123456	OFFICE	MILAN	...	FRANCE
CARRIER 2	654321	LOBBY	MILAN	...	

FIG.6

With regards to claim 15, Hill et al. (EP 1 196 003 A2) teaches the HVAC system includes two or more zones, and the test that is performed activates the primarily dormant component in conjunction with each of the two or more zones. (Col. 2, Paragraph 0007, lines 34-35)

With regards to claim 16, Hill et al. (EP 1 196 003 A2) teaches the transmitting step transmits a test request to two or more HVAC systems from the remote location. (see figure 1)

With regards to claim 17, Hill et al. (EP 1 196 003 A2) teaches the performing step performs a test on the primarily dormant component of the two or more HVAC systems in response to the test request, and produces a test result for each HVAC system. (see figure 7)

With regards to claim 18, Hill et al. (EP 1 196 003 A2) teaches the transmitting step transmits the test result for each HVAC system to a location outside of the building structure. (See figure 1)

With regards to claim 19, Hill et al. (EP 1 196 003 A2) teaches the remote location that the test request is transmitted from is the same as the remote location that the test result is transmitted. (Col. 4, Paragraph 0025)

With regards to claim 20, Hill et al. (EP 1 196 003 A2) teaches the remote location that the test request is transmitted from is different than the remote location that the test result is transmitted. (Col. 4, Paragraph 0025)

With regards to claim 21, Hill et al. (EP 1 196 003 A2) teaches a method for testing a plurality of HVAC systems each in a different building structure or in a different region of a common building structure from a remote location, (see 12;figure 1) the method comprising the steps of:

transmitting a test request to each of the plurality of HVAC systems from the remote location; (Col. 3-4, Paragraph 0021, lines 58 &1-3)

performing one or more tests on each of the HVAC systems in response to the test request (col. 3, Paragraph 0016, lines 6-7), and producing a test result for each of the HVAC systems; (Col. 4, Paragraph 0021, lines 1-2) and

transmitting the test result for each of the HVAC systems to a remote location. (Col. 4, Paragraph 0021, line 2)

With regards to claim 22-24, Hill et al. (EP 1 196 003 A2) teaches at least some of the plurality of HVAC systems include a primarily active component and a primarily dormant component, and wherein at least one of the one or more tests that is performed activates and tests the primarily active component or dormant component of the

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corresponding HVAC system in response to the test request. (Col. 2, Paragraph 0007, lines 34-35)

With regards to claim 25, Hill et al. (EP 1 196 003 A2) teaches a method for determining which of a plurality of HVAC systems will require maintenance, the method comprising the steps of:

transmitting a test request to each of the plurality of HVAC systems from the remote location; (Col. 3-4, Paragraph 0021, lines 58 & 1-3)

performing one or more tests on each of the HVAC systems in response to the test request col. 3, Paragraph 0016, lines 6-7), and producing a test result for each of the HVAC systems; (Col. 4, Paragraph 0021, lines 1-2)

transmitting the test result for each of the selected HVAC systems to a remote location; (Col. 4, Paragraph 0021, line 2) and

identifying which of the HVAC systems will likely need service by analyzing the test results. (Col. 5, Paragraph 0032, line 46-50)

With regards to claim 26, Hill et al. (EP 1 196 003 A2) teaches the step of providing different test requests to at least two of the plurality of HVAC systems, wherein each test request identifies a different test to perform. (see figure 1)

With regards to claim 27, Hill et al. (EP 1 196 003 A2) teaches the step of charging an owner of an HVAC system an amount that depends on the particular test that is performed on the HVAC system. (Col. 3, Paragraph 0009, lines 8-10) It is within reasonable interpretation to infer that service technician would charge for his/her services.

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With regards to claim 28, Hill et al. (EP 1 196 003 A2) teaches the step of scheduling service on at least some of the HVAC systems that have been identified as likely needing service. (Col. 2, Paragraph 0007, lines 30-35)

With regards to claims 29 and 30, Hill et al. (EP 1 196 003 A2) teaches a method for testing an HVAC system for an inside space prior to a heating/cooling season, the HVAC system having a heating/cooling component, the method comprising the steps of:

activating the heating component even though the HVAC system would not normally call for heat/cool; (Col. 1, Paragraph 0004, line 44-48) and

determining if the heating component is in compliance with a number of predetermined conditions. (Col. 5, Paragraph 0032, line 36-39)

With regards to claim 31, Hill et al. (EP 1 196 003 A2) teaches a method of remote testing of HVAC systems comprising the steps of:

transmitting one or more maintenance signals from a remote unit to a specified group of customer HVAC systems, the specified group being a number less than a total number of customer HVAC systems in a customer database; (Col. 3, Paragraph 0016, lines 9-11)

receiving the one or more maintenance signals at each of the HVAC systems, the one or more maintenance signals activating an HVAC component; (Col. 2, Paragraph 0005, lines 9-11)

performing a self-test on the activated HVAC component based on the received one or more maintenance signal; (Col. 2, Paragraph 0005, lines 7-9)

generating self-test result signals from the activated HVAC component based on the self-test preformed on the activated HVAC component; (Col. 2, Paragraph 0007, lines 30-34)

transmitting the self-test result signals from the HVAC system to the remote unit; and receiving the self-test result signals from the HVAC systems at the remote unit. (see figure 1)

With regards to claim 32, Hill et al. (EP 1 196 003 A2) teaches determining the specified group of customer HVAC systems based on the specified group of customer HVAC systems being within a specified geographic area prior to the step of transmitting the one or more maintenance signals. (figure 6-7)

With regards to claim 33, Hill et al. (EP 1 196 003 A2) teaches determining which customer HVAC systems from the specified group of customer HVAC systems likely require maintenance based on the self-test signals received by the remote unit. (see figure 7)

With regards to claim 34, Hill et al. (EP 1 196 003 A2) teaches performing maintenance on the customer HVAC systems that are determined to likely require maintenance based on the self-test signals received by the remote unit. (Col. 2, Paragraph 0007, lines 34-35)

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 7/28/06 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. However the finality has been withdrawn.

Applicant is reminded that during patent examination, the pending claims must be "given the broadest reasonable interpretation consistent with the specification." Applicant always has the opportunity to amend the claims during prosecution, and broad interpretation by the examiner reduces the possibility that the claim, once issued, will be interpreted more broadly than is justified. In re Prater, 415 F.2d 1393, 1404-05, 162 USPQ 541, 550-51 (CCPA 1969).

While the meaning of claims of issued patents are interpreted in light of the specification, prosecution history, prior art and other claims, this is not the mode of claim interpretation to be applied during examination. During examination, the claims must be interpreted as broadly as their terms reasonably allowed. This means that the words of the claim must be given their plain meaning unless applicant has provided a clear definition in the specification. In re Zletz, 893 F.2d 319, 321, 13 USPQ2d 1320, 1322 (Fed. Cir. 1989).

In this instance applicant argues that the prior art of record does not teach Hill et al. does not appear to teach performing a test on a primarily dormant component of the HVAC system. As mentioned in the previous office action, the continuous monitoring/testing of the entire system would encompass monitoring/testing of both the dormant and active components of the HVAC system. As stated by applicant on page eleven of applicant's arguments Hill et al. requests status and or diagnostic data from the HVAC controller, either on a regular basis or upon request from the entry device. Applicant goes on to argue that the Hill reference never initiates a "test". To one of ordinary skill in the art performing diagnostics can be interpreted as being equivalent to

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performing a test. Therefore the rejection is deemed proper. It should also be noted the applicant claims performing a test on the primarily dormant state of the HVAC system. From this broad claim language it is not clear what the difference between primarily dormant and dormant state is. Further it is not clear what the difference between primarily active and active state. The term primarily leaves room for interpretation. Thus the rejection is deemed proper.

With regards to the 101 rejections, the final step of "transmitting the test result to a location outside of the building structure" is not considered tangible. This is merely a manipulation of data. An example of a tangible result would be storing the test result in a computer readable medium for later retrieval or displaying the test result. Similarly the other claims are reject for the same reasons. Please refer to MPEP 2106 for the new guidelines.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Hoog et al. (USPN 6,385,510) teach HVAC remote monitoring.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Aditya S. Bhat whose telephone number is 571-272-2270. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 9-5:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Barlow can be reached on 571-272-2269. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Aditya Bhat
October 13, 2006

BRYAN BUI
PRIMARY EXAMINER

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bryan Bui', is written below the printed name and title.